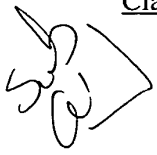


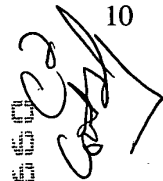
-22-

Claims:

5

1. A patient support apparatus comprising:  
a base frame,  
a patient support coupled to the base frame,  
a plurality of casters each having a sleeve, and  
a plurality of caster mounting tubes, each mounting tube having an interior configured to receive the sleeve of a caster, a plurality of external side walls including a generally planar first external side wall abutting the base frame, the mounting tube being connected to the base frame by welds located adjacent the first external side wall.

10



2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein each of the plurality of caster mounting tubes has a rectangular outer cross-sectional shape defined by four external side walls.

15

3. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein each mounting tube is coupled to the base frame by first and second welds located at opposite ends of the first external side wall.

20

4. The apparatus of claim 3, wherein the first external side wall abutting the base frame is formed to include a hole, the base frame is formed to include a hole, the hole in the base frame is aligned with the hole in the first external side wall, and both holes are located between the first and second welds.

25

5. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the sleeve of each caster has a cylindrical shape and the plurality of caster mounting tubes each include interior partially cylindrical concave wall sections configured to receive one of the cylindrical sleeves.



6. The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the each of the mounting tubes also includes a corner notch located between the concave wall sections.

30



7. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the plurality of casters each include a set screw to orient the caster and the caster mounting tubes are each formed to include a notch configured to receive one of the set screws.

8. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein each of the caster mounting tubes has a square cross-sectional shape.

-23-

9. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the sleeve of each caster has a cylindrical shape.

10. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the sleeve of each caster has a rectangular cross-sectional shape.

11. A method for attaching a caster having a cylindrical sleeve to a base frame of a bed, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a mounting tube having four side walls configured to provide a substantially rectangular cross-sectional shape;

forming an interior opening through the mounting tube having a generally round cross-sectional shape to receive the cylindrical sleeve of the caster therein;

placing a first side wall of the mounting tube against the base frame; welding the mounting tube to the base frame with the first and second welds located at opposite ends of the first side wall; and

installing the sleeve of the caster into the interior opening of the mounting tube.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the caster includes a set screw to orient the caster, the method further comprising the step of forming a notch in the mounting tube to receive the set screw of the caster.

13. The method of claim 11, wherein the four side walls of the mounting tube are configured to define an interior opening through the tube having a generally square cross-sectional shape prior to the forming step.

14. The method of claim 11, wherein each of the caster mounting tubes has a square cross-sectional shape.

15. The method of claim 11, wherein the welding step is performed by a two axis welding machine.

16. A method for attaching a caster to a base frame of a bed, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a mounting tube having four side walls configured to provide a substantially rectangular cross-sectional shape;

providing a caster having a sleeve including a portion having a substantially rectangular cross-sectional shape, a lumen having a substantially

-24-

y  
a cote

rectangular cross-sectional shape, and a spindle having a portion which has a substantially rectangular cross-sectional shape received in the lumen;

placing a first side wall of the mounting tube against the base frame;

welding the mounting tube to the base frame with the first and second

5 welds located at opposite ends of the first side wall; and

installing the sleeve of the caster into the interior opening of the mounting tube.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the provided caster includes a brake attached to the spindle.

10 18. The method of claim 16, wherein the provided caster includes a locking mechanism attached to the spindle.

19. The method of claim 16, wherein each of the caster mounting tubes has a square cross-sectional shape.

15 20. The method of claim 19, wherein each of the caster sleeves has a square cross-sectional shape, the lumen has a square cross-sectional shape, and the portion of the spindle has a square cross-sectional shape.

T 0 3 2 7 5 5 4 2 6 5 0

ADD  
BRI